

HOW MIGHT CHURCHILL HAVE REPLIED TO THIS TELEGRAM?

Indictment of war criminals at Nuremberg, November 1945

Catalogue ref: FO 371/50997

Extract a

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL
in the matter of:
The United States of America,
The French Republic, The United
Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland, and the Union
of Soviet Socialist Republics
against Herman Wilhelm Goering,
et al, Defendants, sitting at
Nurnberg, Germany, on 20 November
1945, 1000-1230, Lord Justice
Lawrence, presiding.

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Extract b

INDICTMENT

I. The United States of America, the French Republic, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics by the undersigned, Robert H. Jackson, Francois de Menthon, Hartley Shawcross and R. A. Rudenko, duly appointed to

represent their respective Governments in the investigation of the charges against and the prosecution of the major war criminals, pursuant to the Agreement of London dated 8th August, 1945, and the Charter of this Tribunal annexed thereto, hereby accuse as guilty, in the respects hereinafter set forth, of Crimes against Peace, War Crimes, and Crimes against Humanity, and of a Common Plan or Conspiracy to commit those Crimes, all as defined in the Charter of the Tribunal, and accordingly name as defendants in this cause and as indicted on the counts hereinafter set out: HERMANN WILHELM GÖRING, RUDOLF HESS, JOACHIM von RIBBENTROP, ROBERT LEY, WILHELM KEITEL, ERNST KALTENBRUNNER, ALFRED ROSENBERG, HANS FRANK, WILHELM FRICK, JULIUS STREICHER, WALTER FUNK, HJALMAR SCHACHT, GUSTAV KRUPP von BOHLEN und HALBACH, KARL DÖNITZ, ERICH RAEDER, BALDUR von SCHIRACH, FRITZ SAUCKEL, ALFRED JODL, MARTIN BORMANN, FRANZ von PAPEN, ARTUR SEYSS-INQUART, ALBERT SPEER, CONSTANTIN von NEURATH and HANS FRITZSCHE, individually and as members of any of the Groups or Organizations next hereinafter named.

WESTERN EUROPE 1939–1945: END OF THE WAR**What is this source?**

These extracts come from the Indictment of the leading Nazis and were read out at the start of their war crimes trial in Nuremburg (Nurnberg is the German name) in 1945.

An indictment is the list of crimes that someone is accused of committing.

What's the background to this source?

During the war the Nazis committed some of the most terrible atrocities in history. The worst was the mass murder of Jews and other minority groups in extermination camps in Poland from 1942 onwards. However, there were many other war crimes as well. During the war, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was determined that war criminals would be hunted down and punished.

This was agreed at Yalta in February 1945 when the leaders of Britain, the USSR and the USA met in a conference.

It's worth knowing that...

The issue of war crimes remains controversial today. Some historians argue that the British and American bombing campaign against German cities was a war crime. Others point out that Britain and America's ally Stalin, leader of the USSR, was probably responsible for more deaths than Hitler. It remains an uncomfortable issue.

The leading Nazis were not the only ones put on trial. Many less senior figures were also tried, most often guards from concentration camps. However, there is little doubt that many thousands of war criminals escaped justice in the chaos and confusion at the end of the war.

How will you use this source?

1. What crimes have these men been accused of committing?
2. What roles did the men who are charged here carry out in the Nazi state?
Carry out your own research.
3. What have you learned from this source that would go into Churchill's reply to the telegram?